



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



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Aquatic Invasive Species Week is May 22-28, 2007

The Great Lakes and Michigan's inland waters, which draw millions of tourists and recreational users, are threatened by more than 183 aquatic invasive species (AIS) now found in the region. To raise awareness about the need for citizens to take action to help prevent new introductions and control the spread of these invaders, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has proclaimed May 22-28, 2007 as Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week.

The importance of individual actions continues to heighten due to the potential arrival of new invaders. In 2006, hydrilla, an invasive aquatic plant, was found in Lake Manitou in Indiana only 50 miles from the Michigan border. This plant can create dense thick mats impenetrable to boaters and swimmers and is extremely costly and difficult to control. A new non-native fish virus called viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus (VHS) is also threatening Great Lakes fisheries. While the VHS poses no human health threat, this deadly fish virus is causing massive fish die-off in Lakes Huron, Erie, St. Clair, and Ontario affecting more than a dozen fish species over the past two years.

Recreational users should demonstrate caution while enjoying Michigan's vast water resources this summer, and a few simple preventative measures can help protect Michigan's pristine waters. Watercrafts and recreational equipment should be inspected before leaving a lake, any vegetation should be removed, all live wells drained, areas that may contain water cleaned, and unused bait should be disposed in the trash.

While recognizing the importance of individual efforts to help prevent the spread of AIS, Director of the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes Ken DeBeaussaert renewed the call for federal action to control ballast water discharges, a key method of introduction of new invasive species. Under state law signed by Governor Granholm in 2005, this year all oceangoing vessels using Michigan ports are required to obtain a permit and treat their ballast water before discharging.

“With our multi-billion dollar tourism, boating, and fishing economy at risk, and without progress at the federal level, Michigan took the necessary action to protect the Great Lakes,” said Director DeBeaussaert. “Michigan’s leadership must now set an example for our Great Lakes neighbors to follow.”

The AIS week is sponsored by the Department of Environmental Quality’s Office of the Great Lakes with collaborative efforts from other state and federal agencies as well as private and nonprofit organizations. For AIS Awareness Week information, the Governor’s proclamation, event listings, activities, and more, please visit the OGL’s Aquatic Invasive Species Web site at www.michigan.gov/deqaquaticinvasives; or contact the OGL at 517-335-4056.

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Editor’s note: DEQ news releases are available on the department’s Internet home page at www.michigan.gov/deq.

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